The Lexicon of Literature at a Glance

A Harmonised Guide to Literary Study, Genre, and Terminology

Nnaji Misheal Offor

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This edition has been harmonised and standardised for consistency of style, structure, and terminology throughout.

Preface

This book began as two separate documents: a short introductory text on the nature of literature, genre, and literary terminology, and a much longer alphabetical glossary of literary terms. Bringing them together into a single, harmonised volume seemed worthwhile, since both are really doing the same job from different angles — helping a student of literature build a working vocabulary for talking about what a text is doing and how it does it.

The first three parts of this book form a short, connected introduction to literary study: what literature is, how genre organises it, and what specialised terms recur across prose, poetry and drama. The fourth and largest part is a comprehensive alphabetical glossary, running from Allegory to Zeugma, gathering together several hundred terms a student of literature is likely to meet.

Numbered subheadings from the original working documents have been removed throughout, replaced with plain section titles, and formatting has been made consistent from the first page to the last. It is offered as a single reference a student can return to at any stage of their study, whether working through the foundations of literary theory or looking up one unfamiliar term in passing.

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- Part Two — The Concept of Genre in Literature
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Part One — Literature as an Imaginative Art

Introduction

Literature is one of the oldest forms of human artistic expression, and arguably one of the most important. Long before writing existed, people were already finding ways to put their experiences, fears, beliefs and hopes into shareable form — through stories, songs, chants, myths, legends, proverbs, riddles and praise poetry. Writing simply gave these expressions a more permanent home, first in manuscripts and books, and today in newspapers, journals, e-books, websites and every other format a screen can hold.

At its simplest, literature is an imaginative branch of art that uses language to represent human experience — our ideas, emotions, relationships, societies, and the realities we live inside. Unpacking that definition means unpacking a handful of ideas that keep recurring throughout literary study: art, language, imagination, experience, and representation.

Literature earns the label “art” because it involves creativity and aesthetic shaping, not mere reporting. It is imaginative because a writer rarely just reproduces reality as it happened; instead, the writer selects, rearranges, transforms and reimagines pieces of life. And its medium is language — this is what separates it from a painter’s canvas or a composer’s instrument.

Consider the difference between two ways of saying the same thing. “The woman was sad” tells you a fact. “Her smile stayed on her lips, but her eyes carried the weight of a thousand unspoken sorrows” does something else entirely — it builds an image, and with it, a feeling. That shift from stating to evoking is close to the heart of what literature does. It doesn't just record life; it remakes it through language.

Literature and Art

Art, broadly, is any creative activity through which people express ideas, emotions and interpretations of life, and it takes many forms depending on its medium. Music works through organised sound — melody, rhythm, harmony, pitch, tempo — so that a slow, mournful line can carry grief the way a fast one can carry celebration. Sculpture works through three-dimensional material: wood, stone, clay, metal, cast or carved into form. Painting works through colour and visual

composition — line, light, shade, arrangement — to build an image or an abstraction.

What separates these art forms from one another, then, is mainly the medium: literature works in words, music in sound, sculpture in physical form, painting in colour and image. What unites them is the underlying purpose — all are ways of turning experience, emotion and interpretation into something communicable.

Literature as Imaginative Art

Calling literature an “imaginative art” is not incidental — it's foundational. Imagination here means the capacity to picture things, invent possibilities, and turn existing experience into new artistic shapes.

A writer isn't obligated to reproduce the world exactly as it is. Literature can be about the real and the possible at once. A novelist writing about poverty, corruption, war or love is free to invent characters, conversations, settings and events through which those realities get explored — meaning literature reaches past plain observation into transformation. It can ask what could happen, what might have happened, what ought to happen, how someone might respond to a given circumstance, or what kind of society might yet exist.

Understanding Imagination

Imagination is the mental capacity to create, visualise, combine, modify or reconstruct ideas and experiences that may not be immediately present to the senses. Remembering a childhood home, picturing a place you've never seen, or inventing a situation that never happened — all of that is imagination at work.

It's what lets human thought move beyond the immediate moment, toward what was, what is, what could be, and what ought to be. For a literary artist, this matters enormously, because so much of literature deals in experience that has been created, reconstructed or transformed inside someone's mind.

The Origin of Imagination

Imagination doesn't spring from nothing. It grows out of the ordinary human business of observing, experiencing, remembering, combining and interpreting the world. We see people, hear sounds,

notice nature, feel things, remember events — and all of that becomes raw material the imagination can rework into something new.

Someone who has watched a bird fly can imagine a human being flying, even without ever seeing it happen — the mind simply fuses two familiar experiences into a new one. In the same way, a writer who has lived through poverty might invent a family struggling to survive, and a writer who has witnessed oppression might build a fictional government that stands in for it. Imagination's materials, in other words, tend to come from somewhere: personal experience, memory, dreams, history, culture, folklore, religion, nature, emotion, other books, and speculation about what's still to come.

Imagination and Origination

Origination is the act of bringing something into existence through invention — characters, events, settings, conversations, imaginary societies, symbols, whole fictional worlds that didn't exist until a writer put them there.

A novelist can invent a character from nothing and give that character a name, a family, a job, a temperament, ambitions and fears. The character itself may be pure invention, even while the human qualities it carries are entirely real. A writer might dream up a king who never ruled anywhere in history, yet give him greed, pride, ambition, jealousy, courage or fear that any reader recognises instantly. Literary imagination, then, works in two directions at once: origination and transformation.

The Imaginary and the Imaginative

"Imaginary" and "imaginative" get used almost interchangeably in casual speech, but they mean different things. Something is imaginary when it exists chiefly in the mind, created by imagination rather than found in physical reality — a fictional character, an invented kingdom, a fantasy creature. Imaginative, by contrast, describes the creative capacity that does the inventing. Put simply: imaginary is what gets made; imaginative is the faculty that makes it.

Literature Is Not Simply Falsehood

Being imaginative doesn't make literature a pile of lies. A novel can be built entirely from invented characters and events while still telling readers something true about being human. A character who loses someone they love may never have existed, but the grief on the page is recognisable as real grief. A war novel populated by invented people can still carry the real weight of fear, death, loss, courage, displacement and survival.

This is why literary truth and factual truth aren't the same currency. A historian cares whether an event actually happened. A literary artist cares about what an imagined event reveals about human nature and the societies people build.

Reality and Imagination

Literature lives in the space between reality and imagination, and writers are constantly moving material across that space. A rough sketch of the process might run: reality supplies observation and experience; observation and experience supply material for imagination; imagination reshapes that material; and language gives the reshaped material its literary form.

A writer might watch poverty up close, then invent a family living through an extreme version of it, then build characters, dialogue, setting, conflict and plot around them. The resulting story is fiction, and yet it can still hold up a mirror to something entirely recognisable.

Imagination and Creativity

Imagination and creativity work as partners: imagination opens up possibilities, and creativity gives those possibilities a shape people can actually read. Someone can imagine a story without ever writing it down — it's the literary artist who turns the imaginative idea into a finished, structured work.

A writer might start with a simple "what if" — what if animals could speak and govern a country? — and that single question can grow into a full political allegory, with creativity supplying the characters, the setting, the political structure, the conflicts, the dialogue, and the ending.

Imagination in Fiction, Poetry and Drama

Fiction shows literary imagination at its clearest. A novel can mix real places with invented characters, historical events with imagined situations, all filtered through artistic interpretation — a story might unfold in a real Nigerian city populated entirely by people who never existed, or a fantasy writer might build an entire world complete with its own geography, cultures, languages and governments.

Poetry leans on imagination just as heavily, transforming ordinary experience through metaphor, simile, personification, symbolism, imagery, hyperbole, irony and allusion. "The wind whispered through the trees" hands the wind a human

voice through personification. "Time is a thief" uses metaphor to capture the way time quietly takes youth, opportunity, and eventually life itself.

Drama depends on imagination too, though it arrives differently — a dramatist creates characters and situations that actors later bring to life through performance, so that dialogue, action, setting, costume, gesture and staging together make an imagined world visible to an audience.

Imagination and the Reader

Imagination isn't the writer's job alone — readers do their share of the work too. When a reader meets a description on the page, they build the mental picture themselves. Told that "the old house stood alone at the edge of the forest," a reader starts constructing the house, the forest, the mood, the sense of isolation, without being handed a single image directly.

Literary communication, seen this way, is really a relationship among three parties: writer, text, and reader. The writer imagines the work into being; the reader imagines it back into life while interpreting it. Reading, in other words, is active work, not passive reception.

Imagination, Memory and Experience

Memory feeds literary imagination constantly. Writers often take remembered experience and reshape it into art — though memory itself is rarely a perfect record. People remember selectively, emotionally, incompletely, and a writer will often transform even their own memories in the retelling.

A childhood experience might become the seed of a poem or a novel, with names, settings, sequence and characters all changed while the emotional core of the original moment survives intact. Memory hands over the material; imagination does the shaping.

Imagination, Character, Setting and Symbolism

Imagination lets a writer build characters with distinct looks, histories, personalities, beliefs, ambitions, fears and relationships — characters who might be pure invention, loosely based on a real person, stitched together from several people, or built to embody an idea or an exaggerated version of human behaviour.

It builds setting the same way. A setting can be real, historical, fictional, imaginary, futuristic or supernatural, and a writer can take an actual place and

reshape it entirely through description, or invent a world from scratch with its own geography, cultures, languages and creatures.

And imagination reaches into ordinary objects and hands them extra meaning. A rose can carry love. A dark night can carry fear or uncertainty. A journey can stand in for a life. A broken mirror can suggest a fractured identity. A river can suggest change. A caged bird can suggest oppression, or the absence of freedom.

Imagination and Human Possibility

One of literature's greatest powers is its ability to imagine worlds that don't yet exist — a just society, a corrupt one, a future one, a world without war, a world remade by technology, a society built on equality, an alternative political order entirely. Literature isn't limited to describing what already is; it can anticipate, question and invent what might be.

Literature, Imagination and the Human Condition

Underneath most literature sits a concern with the human condition — the experiences, struggles, emotions, relationships and circumstances that come with simply being alive. Through imagination, literature lets readers borrow experiences that were never their own. A student who has never lived through war can read a war novel and come away understanding fear, displacement and loss a little better. A reader who has never left home can encounter migration, exile and cultural collision through a novel's pages. Literature, in this sense, stretches human experience past its natural limits.

Oral and Written Literature

Literature can be sorted by how it travels — orally or in writing. Oral literature is composed, performed and preserved by word of mouth, and it existed long before writing did. In traditional societies, especially across Africa, history, belief, custom, value and collective memory moved from one generation to the next almost entirely through spoken forms.

Folktales, myths, legends, proverbs, riddles, songs, dirges, praise poetry, incantations, epics and chants all belong to this oral tradition, often performed with gesture, changing voice, music, dance, repetition and audience participation woven in.

Written literature, by contrast, is recorded and preserved on the page — novels, short stories, poems, plays, essays, biographies, autobiographies, literary

criticism. It can live in books, manuscripts, newspapers, journals and digital files, offering a more stable version of a writer's work, one that can be copied, distributed and read again and again.

Functions of Literature

Literature does a lot of different jobs at once. It entertains, through humour, suspense, romance, adventure and conflict. It educates, teaching readers something about life, society, history, culture, relationships and values. It can expose and criticise corruption, poverty, discrimination, injustice, war and bad leadership.

It preserves culture — carrying beliefs, customs, traditions, languages, histories and values forward. It gives shape to moral values like honesty, courage, humility, loyalty, justice, compassion and responsibility, and it can hold onto the memory of colonialism, slavery, war, political upheaval and migration long after the events themselves have passed.

It gives people a way to express love, grief, anger, fear, hope, loneliness and joy. It builds imagination and empathy by putting readers inside lives unlike their own, and along the way it develops vocabulary, language sense and communication skill. Add it all up, and literature's functions turn out to be aesthetic, educational, social, cultural, psychological, historical and political all at once.

Conclusion

Literature is an imaginative branch of art whose chief medium is language. Like music, sculpture and painting, it offers a creative way of expressing human experience, emotion, idea and interpretation — and its imaginative core is essential to what it is. Life supplies the raw material; imagination reshapes it; creativity gives it structure; language gives it its final artistic form.

It exists in both oral and written form, and it does far more than entertain. It educates, preserves culture, gives emotion somewhere to go, builds imagination and empathy, records history, questions society, carries values forward, and lets human beings explore both what is and what might yet be.
Part Two — The Concept of Genre in Literature

Introduction

Genre is one of those ideas that sits underneath almost every conversation about literature, even when nobody names it directly. Meet a new literary work, and one of the first questions that comes up is simply: what kind of thing is this? A poem, a novel, a short story, a play? A sonnet, an elegy, a ballad? A tragedy, a comedy, something in between? These classifications help readers know roughly what to expect — what form, what structure, what conventions are in play.

The word itself comes from the French genre, meaning kind, type or class. In literary study, genre refers to a category of works sharing certain characteristics — conventions, structures, themes, styles, methods of presentation. Stripped down, genre just means the type of thing a work belongs to.

Major Genres of Literature

Literature is traditionally split into three broad genres — prose, poetry and drama — each of which branches into its own subgenres. Prose covers the novel, novella and short story. Poetry covers forms like the sonnet, ode, elegy, ballad and epic. Drama covers tragedy, comedy, tragicomedy, melodrama and farce.

Prose

Prose is language arranged in ordinary sentences and paragraphs rather than in metrical lines. Literary prose covers novels, novellas, short stories, biographies, autobiographies and literary essays, and it leans heavily on character, plot, setting, narrative, point of view, dialogue, conflict and description. The novel, novella and short story remain its most important fictional forms.

The Novel

A novel is an extended fictional prose narrative — a sequence of events involving characters moving through particular settings and circumstances. Its length is really its defining advantage: it gives a writer room to build complicated plots, multiple characters, several settings, layered themes. Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart, Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre and Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird all

work this way, each using the novel's scale to do something a shorter form couldn't.

The Novella and Short Story

A novella sits between the short story and the full novel — longer than the former, shorter than the latter — and usually keeps its cast of characters and events fairly small. A short story goes further still, concentrating on a limited set of characters, events and conflicts, and its tight length tends to push writers toward economy: fewer words doing more work, focus held tightly on a single incident or experience.

Poetry

Poetry uses language in an unusually concentrated, imaginative way to carry experience, emotion, idea and perception. It leans on rhythm, rhyme, meter, imagery, metaphor, simile, symbolism, personification, alliteration, assonance and repetition, and it can appear in regular verse or free verse, typically arranged in lines and stanzas rather than paragraphs.

Its major forms include lyric poetry (which expresses personal emotion or reflection), narrative poetry (which tells a story), dramatic poetry (which presents characters and situations through speech) and epic poetry (which deals in heroic action and the legendary history of a people).

Drama

Drama presents character, conflict and experience primarily through dialogue and performance, generally written with a stage in mind. It contains characters, dialogue, action, conflict, setting, stage directions, acts and scenes.

Its major types include tragedy (serious conflict, often ending in downfall or suffering), comedy (humour, usually resolving toward reconciliation), tragicomedy (a blend of the two), melodrama (heightened emotion and sensational situations) and farce (exaggeration, improbable situations, physical comedy).

Genre Conventions

Every genre carries conventions — the commonly recognised features and expectations that come attached to it. Tragedy traditionally deals in serious conflict and suffering; comedy traditionally

leans toward humour and resolution; a sonnet traditionally runs fourteen lines, though poets have bent that rule plenty of

times. Conventions aren't laws set in stone — writers follow them, modify them, combine them, or challenge them outright, depending on what the work needs.

Genre classification earns its keep because it helps readers identify a work, sets expectations, guides writers, supports literary study, and makes comparison across works possible. That said, modern literature crosses its own boundaries constantly — a novel might contain poetry, a play might contain songs and prose, a narrative might braid together history, autobiography and fiction. Works like these are usually described as hybrid genres.

Genre, Form and Content

Genre and form are related ideas, but not identical ones. Genre names the broad category a work belongs to; form describes its specific structure. Poetry is a genre; the sonnet is a form within it. Prose fiction is a category; the novel is one particular shape that category can take.

Genre also connects loosely to content — war literature tends toward conflict, romance toward love, detective fiction toward crime and investigation, science fiction toward science and speculative futures, historical fiction toward the past. But content alone doesn't decide genre; form, structure and convention carry just as much weight.

Conclusion

Genre remains one of the essential ideas in literary study — the classification of a work by its shared form, structure, style, subject and convention. Prose, poetry and drama are the three broad traditional genres, each branching into its own subgenres and forms, each carrying conventions that guide writers and readers alike. And yet genre stays flexible: writers keep testing its edges, which is exactly why the concept keeps evolving instead of calcifying. # Part Three — Literary Terminology in Prose, Poetry and Drama

Introduction

Studying literature seriously means picking up a specialised vocabulary along the way. Literary terminology is simply the set of words used to identify, describe, analyse and interpret the features, structures, techniques and effects that show up in literary works — the shared language that lets students, teachers and critics talk about a text precisely instead of vaguely.

Some of these terms belong mostly to one genre; others move freely across prose, poetry and drama. What follows is organised by where each term is most commonly used, while keeping in view how closely the three genres are actually connected.

General Literary Terminology

Allegory — a work in which characters, events or situations stand in for deeper abstract ideas, moral principles, political conditions or philosophical concepts; a story about animals fighting for control of a farm, for instance, can double as a story about human political struggle.

Alliteration — the repetition of a consonant sound at the start of neighbouring words, as in "Peter picked purple peppers."

Allusion — an indirect reference to a well-known person, event, place, text or story; calling someone "a Judas" leans on the reader already knowing what betrayal means in that context.

Ambiguity — a word, statement or passage carrying more than one possible meaning, often used deliberately to widen the range of interpretation a work invites.

Antagonist — the character or force that opposes the protagonist; not necessarily villainous, simply whatever stands on the other side of the central conflict.

Antihero — a central character missing some of the traditional heroic qualities, and who may be cynical, morally uncertain, selfish or flawed.

Archetype — a recurring character, image, symbol or pattern found across different works and cultures, such as the hero, the quest, the journey, or the wise elder.

Atmosphere — the emotional or psychological feeling a work, or a particular scene, creates; a storm-battered, deserted house can build an atmosphere of fear and suspense almost by itself.

Author — the person who writes the work, distinct from the narrator, who is simply the voice telling the story.

Catharsis — the emotional release traditionally associated with watching a tragedy unfold, especially through pity and fear.

Character — a person, animal, supernatural being, or personified entity taking part in a literary work.

Characterisation — how a writer builds and develops character, either directly (telling the reader outright what someone is like) or indirectly (revealing it through speech, action, appearance, thought and relationship).

Conflict — the struggle between opposing forces driving a work, whether between people, between a person and society, within someone's own mind, between a person and nature, or between a person and something supernatural.

Connotation — the emotional or cultural association a word carries beyond its dictionary definition; "home" tends to connote security, family, belonging.

Denotation — a word's literal, dictionary meaning.

Diction — a writer's choice of words, which might be formal, informal, colloquial, technical, archaic, simple, complex, concrete, abstract or figurative.

Foreshadowing — hints planted early in a work pointing toward what will happen later, building anticipation and suspense.

Imagery — language built to create sensory or mental pictures, whether of sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, movement, or internal bodily sensation.

Irony — a gap between appearance and reality, expectation and outcome, or what's said and what's meant; verbal, situational and dramatic irony are its major forms.

Motif — a recurring image, idea, symbol or phrase that helps build a work's larger themes.

Narrative — an account of connected events, which may run in a straight line or jump around, and may be told from any number of points of view.

Narrator — the voice telling the story, whether a character inside it or an outside observer, and whether omniscient, limited, reliable or unreliable.

Paradox — a statement that looks self-contradictory but holds a deeper truth, as in "Less is more."

Satire — the use of humour, irony, exaggeration or sarcasm to expose and criticise human weakness or social failing.

Setting — the time, place and social environment a work unfolds in, including its physical, historical, cultural and political dimensions.

Style — the distinctive way a writer handles language and technique, shaped by diction, sentence structure, figurative language, imagery, rhythm and tone.

Symbolism — using an object, person, action, colour, place or event to carry a deeper meaning; a chain, for instance, might stand in for oppression.

Theme — the central idea or underlying concern a work explores, sometimes with several smaller themes running alongside the main one.

Tone — the writer's or speaker's attitude toward the subject, character, situation or audience — serious, humorous, angry, bitter, joyful, nostalgic, critical, ironic, optimistic, and so on.

Terminology of Prose

Plot — the organised sequence of events in a narrative, traditionally moving through exposition, inciting incident, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution.

Exposition — the opening stretch where key characters, settings and background circumstances get introduced.

Inciting incident — the event that sets the central conflict, and the main action, in motion.

Rising action — the stretch of events where conflict builds and tension climbs.

Climax — the point of greatest intensity, or the decisive turning point, in a narrative.

Falling action — what follows the climax on the way toward the ending.

Resolution — the stage where the major conflicts get settled, changed, or otherwise brought to a close.

Story — the sequence of events involving the characters; where plot concerns itself with how events are arranged and selected, story is simply what happens.

Subplot — a secondary storyline running alongside the main plot, reinforcing or contrasting with it.

Point of view — the perspective a story is told from, chiefly first person, second person or third person.

First-person narration — narration where a character tells the story using I, me, my or we.

Second-person narration — narration that addresses a character or reader directly as "you."

Third-person narration — narration using he, she, they, or character names, which may be omniscient, limited or objective.

Omniscient narrator — a narrator with wide-ranging knowledge of characters, events and thoughts, often including the inner lives of several characters at once.

Limited narrator — a narrator whose knowledge stays mostly confined to one character or a small group of them.

Unreliable narrator — a narrator whose account can't be fully trusted, whether from deception, misunderstanding, limited knowledge, bias or instability.

Flashback — a return to an earlier point in the story, used to supply background or explain the present.

Flash-forward — a glimpse of a future event, shown before the narrative arrives there in its own timeline.

In medias res — Latin for "in the middle of things," describing a narrative that opens mid-action rather than at the chronological start.

Stream of consciousness — a technique that tries to capture the continuous flow of a character's thoughts, memories, perceptions and feelings.

Interior monologue — a character's inner thoughts presented directly, giving the reader access to private mental experience.

Epistolary novel — a novel told through documents such as letters, diaries, journals, emails or reports.

Bildungsroman — a novel tracking the psychological, moral and intellectual growth of a young protagonist; often called a coming-of-age novel.

Picaresque novel — a narrative following a usually lower-class, clever or morally ambiguous protagonist through a string of different social settings.

Historical fiction — fiction set within a recognisable historical period, often blending invented characters with real historical circumstances.

Gothic fiction — fiction built around mystery, terror, the supernatural, dark settings, secrets, death and psychological dread.

Terminology of Poetry

Verse — writing arranged in lines with rhythm or meter, particularly poetry.

Line — a single horizontal unit of a poem, its length and break deliberately controlled by the poet.

Stanza — a grouped unit of lines within a poem, roughly comparable to a paragraph in prose.

Couplet — a two-line stanza, often rhymed.

Tercet — a three-line stanza.

Quatrain — a four-line stanza, which might use a rhyme scheme like ABAB or ABBA.

Quintain — a five-line stanza.

Sestet — a six-line stanza, especially important in the closing portion of a Petrarchan sonnet.

Octave — an eight-line stanza, or the opening eight lines of a Petrarchan sonnet.

Meter — the regular rhythmic pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a poem.

Iamb — a metrical foot of an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed one: da- DUM.

Trochee — a metrical foot of a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed one: DUM-da.

Anapest — a metrical foot of two unstressed syllables followed by a stressed one: da-da-DUM.

Dactyl — a metrical foot of a stressed syllable followed by two unstressed ones: DUM-da-da.

Spondee — a metrical foot of two stressed syllables: DUM-DUM.

Iambic pentameter — a line normally built from five iambic feet, and one of the most important meters in English poetry and drama.

Rhyme — the correspondence of sounds, especially at line-ends, whether perfect, slant, internal, end or eye rhyme.

Rhyme scheme — the pattern of rhyme across a poem, usually marked with letters such as ABAB or ABBA.

Blank verse — unrhymed verse written in regular meter, especially iambic pentameter.

Free verse — poetry without a consistent rhyme scheme or fixed meter, though it may still carry its own rhythm and pattern.

Enjambment — a sentence or phrase carrying over from one line into the next without a pause.

End-stopping — a line ending on a strong grammatical or punctuated pause.

Caesura — a deliberate pause inside a line, often marked by punctuation or built through rhythm.

Refrain — a line or phrase repeated at intervals through a poem or song.

Anaphora — repeating a word or phrase at the start of successive lines or clauses.

Epiphora — repeating a word or phrase at the end of successive lines or clauses.

Assonance — the repetition of vowel sounds in nearby words.

Consonance — the repetition of consonant sounds within or at the end of words.

Onomatopoeia — a word that imitates or suggests the sound tied to its meaning, like buzz, hiss or splash.

Metaphor — a direct comparison in which one thing is described as another, without “like” or “as” — “Time is a thief.”

Simile — a comparison between unlike things using “like,” “as,” or something similar.

Personification — giving human qualities to something non-human, as in “The wind whispered.”

Hyperbole — deliberate exaggeration for effect, as in “I have told you a million times.”

Oxymoron — a pairing of apparently contradictory terms, like “deafening silence” or “bittersweet.”

Apostrophe — a direct address to someone absent, someone dead, an abstract idea, or a non-human object, as in “O Death, where is thy sting?”

Synecdoche — a figure of speech where a part stands for the whole, or the whole for a part, as in “All hands on deck.”

Metonymy — referring to something through a closely associated term, as in "The Crown announced a new policy," where the Crown stands for the monarchy or its authority.

Litotes — understatement through negation, as in "He is not a bad man," which may actually be implying that he's a good one.

Elegy — a poem of mourning, usually written in response to death or serious loss.

Ode — a serious poem of praise, admiration or elevated reflection.

Sonnet — a traditionally fourteen-line poem, with the Shakespearean, Petrarchan and Spenserian sonnets as its major variants.

Ballad — a narrative poem or song, usually told in simple language with repetition and regular rhythm.

Epic — a long narrative poem centred on heroic figures and major events, often carrying a community's values, history or legend.

Limerick — a five-line comic poem, traditionally rhymed AABBA with a distinctive bounce to its rhythm.

Haiku — a short Japanese poetic form traditionally tied to nature and the seasons; the familiar English 5-7-5 pattern is a useful approximation, though it doesn't precisely reproduce the Japanese mora-based original.

Terminology of Drama

Act — a major division of a play.

Scene — a smaller division within an act, often marking a shift in location, time, characters or circumstance.

Dialogue — conversation between two or more characters, and a major vehicle for character, conflict, information and action.

Monologue — an extended speech from one character, whether or not others are on stage to hear it.

Soliloquy — a speech, usually delivered alone on stage, through which a character's private thoughts get spoken aloud.

Aside — a brief remark meant for the audience's ears, supposedly unheard by the other characters present.

Stage directions — a playwright's instructions covering movement, gesture, tone, lighting, costume, setting, entrances, exits and other performance detail.

Dramatis personae — Latin for "characters of the play," referring to the character list usually printed at a play's opening.

Prologue — an introductory section preparing the audience for the action to come.

Epilogue — a closing section following the main action, often providing closure or comment on the outcome.

Chorus — a group of performers who comment on the action, supply information, voice collective reaction, or reinforce a play's themes; especially associated with ancient Greek drama.

Tragic hero — the central figure in a tragedy whose actions, errors or circumstances help bring about a disastrous outcome.

Hamartia — the Greek term for the error or failing that helps cause a tragic hero's downfall, often loosely translated as "tragic flaw."

Hubris — excessive pride or arrogance, especially when a character disregards human or divine limits.

Peripeteia — a sudden reversal of fortune within a dramatic work.

Anagnorisis — a moment of recognition, where a character discovers something that changes their understanding of the whole situation.

Nemesis — a force or agent that brings retribution on a character, often after wrongdoing or excessive pride.

Deus ex machina — Latin for "god from the machine," describing an unexpected outside intervention that suddenly resolves an apparently impossible dramatic problem.

Dramatic foil — a character whose qualities contrast with another's, usually the protagonist's, so that certain traits stand out more clearly.

Comic relief — a humorous scene or character dropped into an otherwise serious work, easing the tension for a moment.

Farce — an exaggerated form of comedy built on improbable situations, misunderstanding, mistaken identity and physical humour.

Melodrama — a dramatic form marked by strong emotion, sensational events, exaggerated situations and clear-cut moral contrasts.

Tragicomedy — a form blending serious or tragic elements with comic ones.

Stagecraft — the technical and artistic work behind a theatrical production: lighting, sound, costume, makeup, props, set design, acting, movement.

Props — objects handled by actors during a performance, such as books, chairs, bags, phones or walking sticks.

Set — the physical environment built or arranged to represent where the action takes place.

Costume — the clothing actors wear, which can communicate status, period, occupation, culture, age or personality.

Blocking — the planned movement and positioning of actors on stage.

Dramatic tension — the sense of anticipation or anxiety built by conflict and the uncertainty of what happens next.

Literary Devices Across Prose, Poetry and Drama

Many devices don't respect genre boundaries at all — metaphor, simile, personification, symbolism, irony, imagery, satire, foreshadowing, flashback, allusion, hyperbole, paradox, oxymoron, euphemism, pun, sarcasm, bathos and pathos can all turn up in prose, poetry or drama alike.

Euphemism — a mild or indirect expression substituted for a harsher one; “he passed away” softens “he died.”

Pun — wordplay built on double meanings or similar sounds, usually for humour or rhetorical effect.

Sarcasm — a cutting or mocking remark whose real meaning may run opposite to its literal wording.

Euphuism — an elaborate, highly ornate prose style particularly associated with sixteenth-century English writing.

Bathos — a sudden drop from elevated or serious language into something trivial or ridiculous, often for comic effect.

Pathos — an element that stirs pity, sympathy or sadness in a reader or audience.

Conclusion

Literary terminology gives students and critics the technical vocabulary needed to move past vague verdicts — “the poem is beautiful,” “the novel is interesting” — and into an actual account of how a work achieves its effects. In prose, that means being able to talk about plot, characterisation, setting, point of view, narrative technique, conflict, symbolism, motif and theme. In poetry, it means verse, stanza, rhythm, meter, rhyme, imagery, figurative language, symbolism, enjambment and form. In drama, it means acts, scenes, dialogue, soliloquy, stage direction, dramatic irony, conflict, suspense, tragic action, comic relief and resolution.

None of this is meant to be memorised for its own sake. It’s the working vocabulary of literary appreciation and criticism — the words that let a reader read more closely, argue more precisely, and write with more confidence in an academic or examination setting.

Final Perspective

Prose, poetry and drama differ in form more than in spirit. Prose builds its narrative through continuous sentences and paragraphs; poetry compresses

language into patterned lines, sounds and images; drama presents its action mainly through speech and performance. And yet all three lean on the same underlying tools — character, conflict, setting, theme, symbolism, irony, imagery.

Studying literature well means holding both things at once: an awareness of genre, and a working vocabulary for what’s actually happening on the page. Knowing what a work is, what genre it belongs to, how its form operates, and what techniques its writer is using — that combination is what mature literary appreciation is built from. # Part Four — A Glossary of Literary Terms

What follows is a single alphabetical reference gathering several hundred literary terms into one consistent format: each entry opens with the term itself, followed by a working definition, any additional points worth knowing, and — where one exists — an example drawn from a recognisable literary work.

A

Allegory. An allegory is a sustained narrative in which characters, actions, and settings operate on two levels: the literal level and the symbolic level. Unlike symbolism (which may be occasional), allegory is systematic and consistent throughout the text. Allegories often convey moral lessons,

political criticism, or religious ideas. A little more detail: Characters often represent abstract ideas (e.g. Justice, Greed, Freedom); Common in political and religious writing; Meaning goes beyond surface story. As an illustration, in Animal Farm, Napoleon represents Joseph Stalin, Snowball represents Leon Trotsky, and the farm symbolizes the Soviet state. Another example is Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan, where Christian represents the human soul on a journey to salvation.

Alliteration. Alliteration is the repetition of initial consonant sounds, not letters. It enhances musical quality, draws attention to phrases, and may reinforce meaning or mood. A few points are worth adding: Common in poetry, proverbs, speeches, and oral literature; The repeated sound must be consonantal; Used for emphasis and memorability. This shows up in "The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew" — The Rime of the Ancient Mariner (Coleridge)

Allusion. An allusion is an indirect reference to something outside the text—history, mythology, religion, literature, or popular culture—assuming the reader's familiarity. Worth noting: Makes writing richer and more layered; Saves explanation by relying on shared knowledge; Can be biblical, classical, historical, or literary. For example, "This was their Waterloo." This alludes to Napoleon's final defeat, suggesting total failure.

Ambiguity. Ambiguity occurs when a word, phrase, or situation has more than one possible interpretation. Writers use it deliberately to create complexity, tension, or intellectual engagement. A few points are worth adding: Common in poetry and modernist texts; Encourages multiple readings; Not necessarily confusion—often intentional. Take, for instance, in Shakespeare's Hamlet, Hamlet's delay in avenging his father can be seen as cowardice, moral reflection, or strategic caution.

Anachronism. An anachronism places something out of its correct historical period. It can be accidental (error) or deliberate (stylistic or thematic effect). A few points are worth adding: Often used in drama and satire; Can modernize ancient stories; Sometimes used for humour or irony. A well-known example is in Julius Caesar, Shakespeare mentions clocks, which did not exist in ancient Rome.

Analogy. An analogy explains an unfamiliar or complex idea by comparing it to something familiar, highlighting similar relationships rather than surface likeness. Also worth flagging: Common in essays, speeches, and didactic writing; Clarifies abstract ideas; More detailed than a simile. This shows up in in Forrest Gump: "Life is

like a box of chocolates. . . " Life's unpredictability is explained through a simple comparison.

Anapest. An anapest is a metrical foot consisting of two unstressed syllables followed by a stressed syllable ($\breve{}\ \breve{}\ /$). It creates a rolling, rhythmic movement, often associated with excitement or speed. Also worth flagging: Common in comic and narrative poetry; Produces a light, musical rhythm. A well-known example is "And the SHEEN of their SPEARS was like STARS on the SEA" — Lord Byron

Anaphora. Anaphora is the repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses or sentences to create rhythm, emphasis, and emotional intensity. In practice: Powerful rhetorical device; Common in speeches, sermons, and protest literature; Reinforces key ideas. One good instance is "We shall fight on the beaches, We shall fight on the landing grounds. . . " — Winston Churchill

Anecdote. An anecdote is a brief narrative of a real incident, often personal, used to illustrate a point, entertain, or persuade. A few points are worth adding: Often found in essays and speeches;

Makes arguments relatable; Can be humorous or serious. For example, chimamanda Adichie often begins essays with personal childhood stories to introduce broader social issues.

Antagonist. The antagonist is the force that opposes the protagonist. This force may be a person, society, nature, fate, or even the protagonist's inner conflict. A little more detail: Not always a villain; Central to conflict development; Helps reveal protagonist's character. Take, for instance, in Things Fall Apart, colonialism functions as a collective antagonist against Okonkwo and Igbo culture.

Anthropomorphism. Anthropomorphism attributes human qualities to non-human beings such as animals, gods, or objects, often to teach moral lessons or simplify complex ideas. Also worth flagging: Common in fables and folklore; Makes stories accessible and engaging; Closely related to personification (but broader). Consider in Aesop's fables, animals talk, reason, and make moral choices like humans.

Antihero. An antihero is a central character who lacks traditional heroic qualities such as bravery, morality, or idealism but remains compelling and central to the narrative. A little more detail: Common in modern and postmodern literature; Reflects moral complexity; Often flawed, cynical, or morally ambiguous. This is visible in meursault in Camus' The Stranger is emotionally detached yet remains the protagonist.

Antithesis. Antithesis places contrasting ideas in parallel grammatical structures to highlight differences and create balance. A little more detail: Enhances rhetorical power; Often philosophical; Common in speeches and poetry. One good instance is "To be, or not to be" — Hamlet

Apostrophe. Apostrophe occurs when a speaker addresses an absent person, abstract idea, or inanimate object as if it could respond. In practice: Expresses strong

emotion; Common in elegies and lyrical poetry; Heightens dramatic intensity. One good instance is "O Grave, where is thy victory?" — Bible / metaphysical poetry

Archetype. An archetype is a universal symbol or character pattern that recurs across cultures and literature, rooted in collective human experience. Worth noting: Associated with Carl Jung; Helps readers quickly recognize roles; Includes character, situation, and symbolic archetypes. A well-known example is the journey motif in The Odyssey is a quest archetype.

Assonance. Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds within nearby words, contributing to mood and musicality. A few points are worth adding: Unlike rhyme, it occurs within lines; Often subtle; Common in free verse. Take, for instance, "The crADle rOCKs above an ABYSS" — Edgar Allan Poe

Asyndeton. Asyndeton omits conjunctions to create speed, urgency, or dramatic impact. In practice: Opposite of polysyndeton; Often used in speeches and poetry; Makes statements forceful. As an illustration, "Blood, sweat, tears." — compressed emotional intensity

Atmosphere. Atmosphere refers to the emotional environment created by a literary work through diction, imagery, setting, and tone. Also worth flagging: Closely related to mood; Helps shape reader's emotional response; May be tense, gloomy, romantic, or cheerful. One good instance is the dark forests and supernatural events in Macbeth create an atmosphere of fear and foreboding.

Autobiography. An autobiography is a first-person narrative of the author's own life, offering personal insight and reflection. A few points are worth adding: Based on memory and experience;

Subjective; Different from biography (written by others). A well-known example is long Walk to Freedom by Nelson Mandela.

Avant-garde. Avant-garde literature challenges traditional forms, styles, and conventions, often experimenting with structure, language, and narrative technique. Some further notes: Often difficult and unconventional; Associated with modernism and postmodernism; Breaks reader expectations. This shows up in james Joyce's Ulysses uses stream of consciousness, fragmented structure, and linguistic experimentation.

B

Ballad. Narrative poem or song telling a story. For example, the Rime of the Ancient Mariner.

Bildungsroman. Coming-of-age novel focusing on moral and psychological growth. As an illustration, great Expectations by Dickens.

Biographical Criticism. Examining an author's life to understand their work. Take, for instance, studying Hemingway's life to interpret The Old Man and the Sea.

Blank Verse. Unrhymed iambic pentameter. Consider shakespeare's plays.

Burlesque. Work mocking a subject through exaggeration. A well-known example is pope's The Rape of the Lock.

Bathos. Abrupt shift from serious to trivial, often unintentionally humorous. For example, "He spent his final hour doing what he loved most—watching TV."

Binary Opposition. Pair of contrasting concepts highlighting tension. A familiar case is good vs Evil.

Biography. Account of a person's life written by another. For example, alexander Hamilton by Ron Chernow.

Black Humor / Dark Humor. Humor treating serious subjects ironically. For example, heller's Catch-22.

Bravura. Bold, brilliant style meant to impress. A well-known example is shakespeare's Macbeth soliloquies.

Byronic Hero. Brooding, rebellious antihero with a tragic flaw. This is visible in heathcliff in Wuthering Heights.

Brevity. Conciseness in writing. For example, "Brevity is the soul of wit." — Hamlet.

Backdrop Setting. A setting that does not influence events. This is visible in a city skyline mentioned in passing.

Bias. Preference or prejudice influencing a work. This shows up in historical accounts favoring one side of a war.

C

Caesura. A pause or break within a line of poetry, often for dramatic effect. A familiar case is "To be, or not to be — that is the question."

Characterization. The process by which a writer develops a character. For example, through dialogue and action, Jane Austen portrays Elizabeth Bennet's wit in Pride and Prejudice.

Climax. The point of greatest tension or turning point in a story. A well-known example is the confrontation between Hamlet and Claudius.

Colloquialism. Informal words or expressions used in everyday speech. This shows up in "Y'all" in southern American literature.

Conflict. A struggle between opposing forces. As an illustration, man vs. self, man vs. man, man vs. nature.

Connotation. The implied or associated meaning of a word beyond its literal definition. As an illustration, "Home" connotes warmth and security, not just a physical building.

Consonance. Repetition of consonant sounds in close proximity. Consider "The lumpy, bumpy road."

Couplet. Two consecutive lines of verse, usually rhymed. We see this clearly in shakespeare: "So long as men can breathe or eyes can see, / So long lives this, and this gives life to thee."

Chronology / Chronological Order. The arrangement of events in order of occurrence. A well-known example is most historical novels follow chronological order.

Colloquial Diction. Use of everyday language in dialogue or narration. A familiar case is mark Twain's Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.

Conceit. An extended metaphor with a complex or surprising comparison. This is visible in john Donne compares two lovers to the two legs of a compass in A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning.

D

Dactyl. A metrical foot consisting of one stressed syllable followed by two unstressed syllables. A familiar case is mER-ri-ly

Dactylic Hexameter. A poetic meter with six dactyls per line, common in epic poetry. For example, used in Homer's The Iliad.

Denotation. The literal or dictionary meaning of a word. A well-known example is snake = a reptile.

Denouement. The final resolution or untangling of events in a story. As an illustration, the ending of a novel where conflicts are resolved.

Deus ex Machina. An unexpected character or event that resolves the conflict suddenly. We see this clearly in a god appearing at the end of a play to save the hero.

Dialect. A regional or social variety of a language used in speech or writing. This is visible in use of Nigerian pidgin in a novel.

Dialogue. A conversation between characters in a literary work. One good instance is the exchanges between characters in a drama.

Diction. The choice and use of words by a writer. For example, formal diction in a speech; informal diction in a diary.

Didactic. Literature intended to teach a moral lesson. Consider animal Farm by George Orwell.

Dilemma. A situation requiring a choice between two equally difficult options. One good instance is a hero choosing between love and duty.

Direct Characterization. When an author directly describes a character's traits. As an illustration, "He was a wicked king."

Direct Speech. The exact words spoken by a character, usually in quotation marks. As an illustration, she said, "I will return tomorrow."

Dirge. A poem or song expressing mourning for the dead. As an illustration, funeral chants or elegiac songs.

Discourse. Extended written or spoken communication in literature. Take, for instance, political discourse in a novel.

Dissonance. Harsh or jarring sounds in poetry, often used to create tension. We see this clearly in clash, crash, clatter.

Dramatic Irony. When the audience knows something the characters do not. For example, the audience knows Oedipus killed his father.

Dramatic Monologue. A speech by one character revealing inner thoughts. A familiar case is browning's My Last Duchess.

Dramatic Poem. A poem written in the form of a speech by a character. Take, for instance, the Bishop Orders His Tomb by Robert Browning.

Drama. A literary work written to be performed on stage. As an illustration, the Marriage of Anansewa by Efua Sutherland.

Double Entendre. A word or phrase with two meanings, one often suggestive. A familiar case is a phrase with both literal and suggestive meanings.

Dystopia. An imagined society characterized by oppression and suffering. A familiar case is 1984 by George Orwell.

Dynamic Character. A character who undergoes significant change. As an illustration, ebenezer Scrooge in A Christmas Carol.

Description. The use of details to create vivid images in writing. A well-known example is describing a forest in a novel.

Digression. A temporary departure from the main subject in a narrative. For example, a narrator telling a side story.

Detachment. An objective or unemotional tone in narration. This shows up in journalistic narration in a novel.

Double Plot. A narrative with two interconnected storylines. One good instance is subplots in Shakespearean drama.

Domestic Tragedy. A tragedy focusing on ordinary people rather than nobles. One good instance is death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller.

Dramatis Personae. A list of characters in a play. As an illustration, found at the beginning of a drama text.

Doggerel. Poorly written or trivial poetry. A well-known example is simple rhymes lacking depth.

Dialogue Tag. Words that identify who is speaking. One good instance is he said, she replied.

E

Elegy. A poem written to mourn the dead or express loss. This shows up in elegy Written in a Country Churchyard by Thomas Gray.

Epic. A long narrative poem celebrating heroic deeds and events of national or cultural importance. This shows up in the Odyssey by Homer.

Epic Hero. A larger-than-life hero with extraordinary abilities. One good instance is odysseus in The Odyssey.

Epic Simile. An extended simile used in epic poetry. For example, long comparisons in The Iliad.

Epigram. A short, witty, and memorable statement or poem. As an illustration, "I can resist everything except temptation." — Oscar Wilde.

Epilogue. A concluding section of a literary work. Take, for instance, the final speech at the end of a play.

Epiphany. A sudden moment of insight or realization. A well-known example is a character suddenly understands the truth about life.

Epitaph. An inscription on a tombstone in memory of the dead. A well-known example is short poetic lines on graves.

Epithet. A descriptive word or phrase expressing a quality. A familiar case is "Swift- footed Achilles."

Exposition. The introduction that provides background information. A familiar case is the opening of a novel explaining setting and characters.

Extended Metaphor. A metaphor developed over several lines or an entire poem. For example, life compared to a journey throughout a poem.

External Conflict. A struggle between a character and an outside force. This is visible in man vs society.

Internal Conflict. A struggle within a character's mind. This is visible in a character torn between good and evil.

Enlightenment. A literary movement emphasizing reason and logic. A familiar case is works by Voltaire.

Empathy. The ability of a reader to understand a character's feelings. Take, for instance, feeling pity for a tragic hero.

Euphony. Pleasant and harmonious sounds in poetry. One good instance is "Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness."

Euphemism. A mild expression used instead of a harsh one. A well-known example is "Passed away" instead of "died."

Exaggeration. Deliberate overstatement for effect. One good instance is "I have told you a million times."

Essay. A short prose work discussing a subject. This is visible in critical essays in literature.

Epistolary Novel. A novel written in the form of letters or diary entries. One good instance is pamela by Samuel Richardson.

Emotion. Feelings conveyed in a literary work. Take, for instance, grief in an elegy.

End Rhyme. Rhyming words at the ends of lines of poetry. A familiar case is light / night

Eye Rhyme. Words that look alike but sound different. This shows up in love / move

Enjambment. The continuation of a sentence without a pause beyond a line break. Take, for instance, the sun rose over the hill / and flooded the valley with light.

Enigma. Something mysterious or puzzling. Consider a character whose motives are unclear.

Expletive. An exclamatory word or phrase used for emphasis. This shows up in “Oh!” “Ah!”

Exemplum. A short moral story used to illustrate a lesson. For example, moral tales in medieval literature.

Existentialism. A philosophy focusing on individual freedom and choice. One good instance is works by Albert Camus.

Elevated Language. Formal or poetic diction. One good instance is language used in epic poetry.

Environmental Imagery. Imagery drawn from nature and surroundings. This shows up in forest imagery in African poetry.

F

Fable. A short story that teaches a moral lesson, often using animals as characters. We see this clearly in aesop’s Fables.

Falling Action. The part of the plot that follows the climax and leads to the resolution. For example, events after the major conflict has been resolved.

Fantasy. A genre involving magical or supernatural elements. A well-known example is harry Potter series.

Farce. A comedy that uses exaggerated situations and physical humor. Consider mistaken identity in comedy plays.

Figurative Language. Language that goes beyond literal meaning. A familiar case is metaphor, simile, personification.

Flashback. A scene that interrupts the present to show past events. This shows up in a character recalling childhood.

Flat Character. A character with a single dominant trait. A well-known example is a greedy merchant.

Foil. A character who contrasts with another to highlight qualities. A familiar case is laertes as a foil to Hamlet.

Folklore. Traditional stories passed orally. We see this clearly in african moonlight tales.

Foreshadowing. Hints about future events in a story. For example, dark clouds suggesting tragedy.

Form. The structural organization of a literary work. Take, for instance, sonnet, drama, novel.

Free Verse. Poetry without regular rhyme or meter. We see this clearly in poems by Walt Whitman.

Frame Narrative. A story within another story. This is visible in things Fall Apart uses folktales within the narrative.

Fiction. Literature based on imagination rather than fact. A well-known example is novels and short stories.

Figurative Meaning. The symbolic or implied meaning of a word or phrase. A familiar case is "A heart of stone."

First-Person Narration. Story told using "I" or "we." For example, mine Boy by Peter Abrahams.

Flash Fiction. Extremely short fictional narrative. This is visible in stories under 1,000 words.

Folktale. A traditional story explaining cultural beliefs. This is visible in tortoise stories in African literature.

Foot. A basic unit of poetic meter. A well-known example is iamb, trochee, dactyl.

Formalism. A critical approach focusing on form and structure. We see this clearly in analysis of rhyme and meter.

Freytag's Pyramid. A model describing plot structure. For example, exposition → Climax → Resolution.

Feminist Criticism. A critical approach focusing on gender and power. Consider analysis of women's roles in literature.

Fidelity. Faithfulness to source material in adaptation. We see this clearly in film adaptations of novels.

Figurative Comparison. A comparison using metaphor or simile. A well-known example is "Life is a journey."

Fatal Flaw (Hamartia). A character defect leading to downfall. As an illustration, pride in tragic heroes.

Fictional Technique. Methods used by writers to tell stories. A well-known example is stream of consciousness.

Foreshortening. Compression of time or events. Take, for instance, years summarized in a paragraph.

Folk Drama. Drama based on traditional themes. For example, masquerade performances.

Fantastic Literature. Literature dealing with unreal elements. Take, for instance, mythical narratives.

Flashback Technique. Narrative method of recalling past events. This shows up in recollections in autobiographical novels.

G

Genre. A category or type of literary work based on form, style, or subject. For example, drama, prose, poetry.

Gothic Literature. A genre characterized by mystery, horror, and dark settings. Take, for instance, frankenstein by Mary Shelley.

Grotesque. A style that blends the strange, ugly, and comic. For example, deformed characters used for satire.

Griot. A traditional African oral historian and poet. This shows up in praise singers in West Africa.

Greek Tragedy. Drama originating from ancient Greece focusing on fate and downfall. We see this clearly in oedipus Rex by Sophocles.

Grounded Character. A realistic, believable character. As an illustration, ordinary villagers in realist novels.

Gutter Press. Sensational journalism with exaggerated stories. One good instance is used in satire.

Glossary. An alphabetical list of terms with definitions. This shows up in found at the back of textbooks.

Grammatical Inversion. Unusual word order for emphasis. As an illustration, "Gone are the days."

Gesture. Physical movement expressing meaning in drama. A familiar case is an actor's hand movement on stage.

Global Theme. A universal idea applicable across cultures. Take, for instance, love, death, betrayal.

Graveyard Poetry. 18th-century poems focused on death and mortality. A familiar case is thomas Gray's elegy.

Graphic Imagery. Vivid and explicit description. A well-known example is war scenes in novels.

Gnomical Saying. A short wise saying. Consider proverbs.

Ground Bass. A repeated theme or idea in literature. A well-known example is recurrent motif.

Group Character. A collective group treated as one character. This is visible in the chorus in Greek drama.

Gait. A character's manner of walking used for description. Consider slow gait indicating old age.

Genre Fiction. Popular fiction written for entertainment. Consider romance, thriller.

Generational Conflict. Conflict between older and younger generations. This is visible in father–son struggles in novels.

Ghost Character. A supernatural or symbolic presence. As an illustration, banquo's ghost in Macbeth.

Gesture Language. Communication through body movement in drama. Take, for instance, nodding to show agreement.

Grand Narrative. A dominant overarching story or ideology. A familiar case is colonial narratives.

Gothic Hero. A brooding, mysterious protagonist. This is visible in heathcliff in Wuthering Heights.

Grammatical Parallelism. Use of similar grammatical structures. This is visible in "I came, I saw, I conquered."

Guide Character. A character who provides insight or guidance. We see this clearly in a narrator guiding readers.

Gag. A humorous trick or joke in comedy. A familiar case is repeated comic action.

Gesture Symbolism. Gestures carrying symbolic meaning. A well-known example is bowing as respect.

Global Conflict. A conflict affecting many characters or societies. Take, for instance, war in epic novels.

Gnomon. A critical concept referring to what is left unsaid. A well-known example is silence implying guilt.

Gritty Realism. Harsh depiction of real life. For example, urban poverty narratives.

H

Hamartia. A tragic flaw that leads to a hero's downfall. Consider pride in Oedipus Rex.

Hero. The main character admired for noble qualities. Consider okonkwo in Things Fall Apart.

Heroine. A female hero or main female character. For example, juliet in Romeo and Juliet.

Hubris. Excessive pride or self-confidence. A familiar case is macbeth's ambition.

Historical Fiction. Fiction based on historical events. This is visible in half of a Yellow Sun by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

Hyperbole. Exaggeration for emphasis. For example, "I've told you a thousand times."

Homonym. Words with the same spelling or sound but different meanings. For example, bat (animal / sports tool).

Homophone. Words that sound alike but differ in meaning. This shows up in sea / see.

Homograph. Words spelled alike but pronounced differently. Take, for instance, lead (metal) / lead (guide).

Humor. Quality that makes something amusing. This shows up in comic scenes in drama.

Horror. A genre intended to frighten. A familiar case is ghost stories.

Heptameter. A line of poetry with seven metrical feet. This shows up in rarely used in modern poetry.

Hexameter. A poetic line with six metrical feet. This is visible in epic poetry.

Heroic Couplet. Two rhyming lines in iambic pentameter. This shows up in poems by Alexander Pope.

Hagiography. Writing that idealizes a person's life. This is visible in biographies of saints.

Historical Drama. Drama based on historical events. This is visible in shakespeare's history plays.

Humanism. A literary movement emphasizing human values. This shows up in renaissance literature.

Heuristic Reading. Exploratory reading for understanding. One good instance is first reading of a poem.

Hyperbaton. Unusual word order for emphasis. A familiar case is “Gone are the days.”

Homily. A moral or religious speech. One good instance is sermons.

Heterodiegetic Narrator. A narrator not involved in the story. Take, for instance, third-person narration.

Hypotaxis. Use of subordinate clauses. We see this clearly in long complex sentences.

Heroic Drama. Drama featuring noble characters and heroic deeds. We see this clearly in classical tragedies.

Hallucination. A false perception used in psychological drama. One good instance is macbeth seeing a dagger.

Hubristic Character. A character driven by excessive pride. This is visible in king Lear.

Heuristic Device. A technique aiding discovery. This is visible in symbol analysis.

Hypallage. Transferred epithet. A well-known example is “Restless night.”

High Tragedy. Tragedy involving kings or nobles. This shows up in hamlet.

Historical Allusion. Reference to a real historical event or figure. We see this clearly in mention of World War II.

Hybrid Genre. Combination of two or more genres. We see this clearly in romantic tragedy.

I

Iamb. A metrical foot consisting of an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. One good instance is reLAX

Iambic Pentameter. A line of poetry with five iambs. We see this clearly in shakespeare’s plays.

Icon. A person or object representing an idea. Consider the dove as a symbol of peace.

Idiom. An expression whose meaning is not literal. A familiar case is “Kick the bucket.”

Idiolect. An individual’s unique speech pattern. One good instance is a character’s personal manner of speaking.

Imagery. Language that appeals to the senses. As an illustration, visual imagery of a sunset.

Imagist Poetry. Poetry focusing on precise imagery. We see this clearly in poems by Ezra Pound.

Implicit Meaning. Meaning suggested rather than stated. A familiar case is tone implying anger.

In Medias Res. A story beginning in the middle of action. We see this clearly in epic openings like The Iliad.

Incantation. A chant or spell-like utterance. A familiar case is ritual chants in African poetry.

Indirect Characterization. Revealing character through actions and dialogue. This shows up in a character’s behavior shows greed.

Indirect Speech. Reported speech rather than quoted speech. This shows up in he said that he was tired.

Interior Monologue. A character's inner thoughts. One good instance is stream of consciousness technique.

Irony. A contrast between expectation and reality. For example, a fire station burning down.

Situational Irony. When the opposite of what is expected occurs. For example, a traffic policeman violating traffic rules.

Dramatic Irony. When the audience knows more than characters. Take, for instance, oedipus' true identity.

Verbal Irony. Saying the opposite of what is meant. As an illustration, "What a lovely weather!" during a storm.

Invocation. A call for divine or supernatural help. We see this clearly in opening of epic poems.

Impressionism. A style focusing on subjective experience. We see this clearly in modernist fiction.

Interlude. A short performance between acts. Take, for instance, comic interludes in drama.

Intertextuality. Relationship between literary texts. We see this clearly in references to the Bible in poetry.

Internal Conflict. Psychological struggle within a character. A well-known example is hamlet's indecision.

Ironist. A writer who frequently uses irony. Take, for instance, jonathan Swift.

Invective. Harsh or abusive language. For example, political satire.

Intonation. Rise and fall of voice in speech. Take, for instance, actor's delivery on stage.

Innocent Narrator. A narrator unaware of the full meaning. Take, for instance, child narrators.

Ideology. A system of beliefs. We see this clearly in colonial ideology in literature.

Imagination. Creative faculty of the mind. For example, fantasy writing.

Inversion. Reversal of normal word order. This is visible in "Blessed are the meek."

Interjection. An exclamatory word expressing emotion. A well-known example is "Oh!", "Ah!"

J

Jargon. Specialized language used by a particular group or profession. As an illustration, legal jargon in courtroom dramas.

Juxtaposition. Placing two ideas or characters side by side for contrast. This shows up in rich vs poor characters in a novel.

Justice Poem. A poem centered on fairness and moral judgment. A well-known example is protest poetry.

Journey Motif. A recurring theme of physical or spiritual travel. This is visible in the Pilgrim's Progress.

Jester. A comic character who provides humor and insight. As an illustration, the Fool in King Lear.

Journal. A personal record of events or thoughts. Consider diary-style narratives.

Juvenilia. Works written by an author in youth. Take, for instance, early poems of famous writers.

Judicial Language. Formal language associated with law. This shows up in courtroom speeches in drama.

Jingoism. Extreme patriotic sentiment. This is visible in nationalistic themes in war literature.

Jolt Ending. A sudden, surprising conclusion. One good instance is twist endings in short stories.

Jest. A joke or witty remark. A well-known example is comic dialogue in drama.

Jazz Poetry. Poetry influenced by jazz rhythms. This shows up in langston Hughes' poems.

Justification. Explanation of actions or themes. Take, for instance, author's rationale in criticism.

Juvenescent Style. A youthful tone in writing. Consider young adult fiction.

Journalistic Style. Objective, factual writing. For example, newspaper-like narration.

Jargonization. Excessive use of specialized terms. As an illustration, overly technical prose.

Judgement Scene. A scene involving moral or legal judgment. A well-known example is court trials in novels.

Jumble Narrative. A non-linear, disordered storyline. This is visible in experimental fiction.

Joke Motif. Repeated humorous element. As an illustration, running gags in comedy.

Jaded Character. A character worn out by experience. Take, for instance, cynical narrators.

Jazz Rhythm. Syncopated rhythm in poetry. We see this clearly in beat poetry.

Jargon Characterization. Character revealed through professional speech. Take, for instance, doctors using medical terms.

Juvenile Literature. Literature written for young readers. Consider children's novels.

Judicial Conflict. Conflict resolved through legal means. As an illustration, courtroom dramas.

Jest Book. A collection of jokes or humorous stories. This is visible in medieval jest books.

Jettisoned Plot. Abandoned storyline. Take, for instance, dropped subplots.

Jocularity. Playful humor in tone. Consider light-hearted narration.

Journey Narrative. Story structured around travel. This is visible in heart of Darkness.

Jargon-based Dialogue. Dialogue using specialized language. We see this clearly in military conversations.

Judicial Tragedy. Tragedy centered on law and punishment. A familiar case is trial- based tragic drama.

K

Kenning. A compound metaphor used especially in Old English poetry. This shows up in whale-road for the sea in Beowulf.

Katharsis (Catharsis). The emotional release felt by the audience at the end of a tragedy. This shows up in pity and fear in Greek tragedy.

Keynote. A central idea or theme of a literary work. Take, for instance, justice as the keynote of a play.

Kinetic Imagery. Imagery that conveys movement. Take, for instance, "The leaves danced in the wind."

Kingly Tragedy. A tragedy involving kings or royal families. Consider macbeth.

Knittelvers. A form of German rhymed verse. This shows up in used in medieval poetry.

Kunstlerroman. A novel about an artist's development. As an illustration, a Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.

Kinesis. Movement used to convey meaning in drama. As an illustration, stage movement.

Kerygma. Proclamatory or preaching style of writing. A familiar case is religious literature.

Kitsch. Art considered overly sentimental or lacking seriousness. Consider excessively sentimental poems.

Knowledge Motif. A recurring theme of learning or discovery. As an illustration, enlightenment in coming-of-age novels.

Keyword. A word central to a text's meaning. For example, "Freedom" in protest literature.

Kinesthetic Response. Reader's physical or emotional reaction. A familiar case is feeling tension in a thriller.

King Character. A royal figure in literature. As an illustration, king Lear.

Kinship Theme. Theme centered on family relationships. As an illustration, father– son conflict.

Karmic Justice. Moral cause-and-effect principle. One good instance is characters suffering consequences of actions.

Klaxon Effect. Sudden loud or shocking event in narrative. This is visible in unexpected news disrupting calm.

Knowledgeable Narrator. An all-knowing narrator. One good instance is omniscient narrator.

Knot (Plot Knot). The point where conflict becomes complicated. A familiar case is rising action.

Kinesis Symbolism. Movement carrying symbolic meaning. Take, for instance, a character pacing showing anxiety.

Keyword Motif. Repeated significant word. As an illustration, repetition of "darkness".

King's Fool. A comic character who speaks truth. This is visible in the Fool in King Lear.

Killjoy Character. A character who disrupts happiness. A familiar case is antagonists in comedy.

Knotty Plot. A complex plot. A familiar case is mystery novels.

Knowledge Conflict. Conflict arising from ignorance or discovery. For example, revelation scenes.

Kerygmatic Tone. Authoritative preaching tone. A well-known example is prophetic poetry.

Kinesthetic Imagery. Imagery appealing to the sense of movement. One good instance is “She leapt across the stream.”

Kinds of Comedy. Types such as satire, farce. A familiar case is shakespearean comedy.

Knight-Errant. A wandering knight seeking adventure. For example, don Quixote.

Key Scene. A crucial scene in the narrative. One good instance is the climax.

L

Legend. A traditional story believed to have a historical basis. A well-known example is stories of King Arthur.

Lyric. A short poem expressing personal emotions. We see this clearly in love poems.

Lyric Poetry. Poetry that expresses the poet’s feelings. One good instance is still I Rise by Maya Angelou.

Lament. A poem or song expressing sorrow. A well-known example is funeral songs.

Language. The medium of expression in literature. For example, english, French, Igbo.

Literal Meaning. The exact, dictionary meaning of words. This is visible in a dog is an animal.

Local Colour. Use of regional details to enhance realism. One good instance is igbo proverbs in African novels.

Leitmotif. A recurring theme or phrase. This is visible in repeated reference to darkness.

Limited Omniscient Narrator. Narrator who knows the thoughts of one character. This shows up in third-person limited narration.

Linear Narrative. A story told in chronological order. We see this clearly in traditional novels.

Literary Device. Techniques used by writers. One good instance is metaphor, irony.

Literary Criticism. Analysis and evaluation of literature. As an illustration, feminist criticism.

Literary Movement. A group of writers sharing common style. A well-known example is romanticism.

Literary Style. The manner of expression in writing. A well-known example is simple or ornate style.

Long Poem. A poem of considerable length. A familiar case is epics.

Litotes. Understatement using negation. One good instance is “Not bad” meaning good.

Leitwortstil. Repetition of key words for emphasis. One good instance is biblical literature.

Lyrical Ballad. A narrative poem with musical quality. This shows up in wordsworth’s poems.

Literary Canon. A body of accepted literary works. A well-known example is shakespeare’s plays.

Leitmotivic Imagery. Repeated imagery reinforcing theme. One good instance is water imagery.

Lost Generation. Writers disillusioned after World War I. This shows up in ernest Hemingway.

Lexical Choice. Selection of words by a writer. Consider formal vs informal diction.

Leitmotif Character. A character associated with a recurring theme. A well-known example is a recurring trickster figure.

Literary Tradition. Established ways of writing. This is visible in oral tradition.

Low Comedy. Comedy based on physical humor. A well-known example is slapstick.

Lampoon. A satirical attack on a person. A well-known example is political satire poems.

Legendry. Body of legends. A familiar case is folklore collections.

Linguistic Register. Level of formality in language. Consider casual vs formal speech.

Locus Amoenus. An idealized pleasant place. Take, for instance, peaceful gardens in poetry.

Leitmotif Theme. A recurring thematic element. This is visible in fate in tragedy.

M

Metaphor. A direct comparison between two unlike things. This shows up in "Time is a thief."

Simile. A comparison using like or as. This shows up in "As brave as a lion."

Metonymy. Substitution of a related term for something. A familiar case is "The crown" for the king.

Motif. A recurring idea, image, or symbol. This is visible in blood imagery in Macbeth.

Mood. The emotional atmosphere of a literary work. We see this clearly in dark mood in a tragedy.

Moral. The lesson taught by a story. This shows up in honesty is rewarded.

Monologue. A long speech by one character. Consider hamlet's soliloquies.

Modernism. A literary movement breaking traditional forms. Take, for instance, t.S. Eliot's poetry.

Myth. A traditional story explaining natural events. This shows up in greek myths.

Mythology. A collection of myths. A well-known example is yoruba mythology.

Metre (Meter). The rhythmic structure of a poem. A well-known example is iambic pentameter.

Mimesis. Imitation of reality in art. This is visible in realist novels.

Metafiction. Fiction that draws attention to itself as fiction. A well-known example is a narrator addressing the reader.

Memoir. A personal account of experiences. A familiar case is autobiographical writing.

Magical Realism. Blend of realism and fantasy. Consider works by Gabriel García Márquez.

Mock Epic. A comic imitation of epic form. This shows up in the Rape of the Lock.

Monody. A poem mourning a single person. One good instance is funeral poems.

Metaphysical Poetry. Poetry marked by complex metaphors. This is visible in john Donne's poems.

Motive. A reason for a character's actions. For example, revenge.

Masque. A dramatic form with music and dance. A well-known example is court entertainments.

Melodrama. Drama with exaggerated emotions. A well-known example is clear heroes and villains.

Metalepsis. A rhetorical figure mixing narrative levels. Take, for instance, author intruding into the story.

Metrical Foot. A basic unit of poetic rhythm. Take, for instance, iamb, trochee.

Metaphysical Conceit. An extended metaphor. This is visible in love compared to a compass.

Motif Cluster. Group of related motifs. One good instance is darkness and night imagery.

Medieval Literature. Literature from the Middle Ages. A familiar case is beowulf.

Mythic Archetype. A recurring myth-based character type. One good instance is the hero.

Moral Allegory. Story teaching moral lessons symbolically. A well-known example is pilgrim's Progress.

Monomyth. The hero's journey pattern. As an illustration, journey, trials, return.

Mockery. Ridicule used in satire. One good instance is political satire.

N

Narrative. A story or account of events. This shows up in a novel's storyline.

Narrator. The voice that tells the story. As an illustration, first-person narrator.

Narrative Technique. Methods used to tell a story. We see this clearly in flashback.

Narrative Voice. The distinctive style of narration. A well-known example is sarcastic narrator.

Naturalism. A literary movement emphasizing environment and heredity. This shows up in works by Émile Zola.

Neoclassicism. A movement inspired by classical literature. For example, 18th- century poetry.

Novel. A long fictional prose narrative. A well-known example is to Kill a Mockingbird.

Novella. A short novel. Consider animal Farm.

Nonfiction. Literature based on facts. We see this clearly in biographies.

Narrative Arc. The structure of a story. A familiar case is beginning–middle–end.

Nominalism. Focus on particular things rather than universals. Take, for instance, individual-centered narratives.

Narrative Pace. The speed at which a story unfolds. One good instance is fast-paced action scenes.

New Criticism. A formalist literary approach. A familiar case is close reading.

Nomenclature. System of naming in literature. This is visible in symbolic character names.

Narrative Perspective. Point of view from which a story is told. For example, omniscient perspective.

Nonsense Verse. Poetry with playful, illogical language. A well-known example is lewis Carroll's poems.

Neo-colonial Literature. Works addressing post-independence control. A familiar case is african protest novels.

Nostalgia. Longing for the past. As an illustration, memory-filled narratives.

Nonlinear Narrative. Story told out of chronological order. For example, fragmented novels.

Narratology. The study of narrative structure. A familiar case is plot analysis.

Negative Capability. Ability to accept uncertainty. Consider keats' poetry.

Naming. Use of names to convey meaning. A well-known example is allegorical names.

Narrative Conflict. Central struggle in a story. Take, for instance, man vs society.

Novel of Manners. A novel focusing on social behavior. This shows up in jane Austen's novels.

Narrative Distance. Emotional closeness between narrator and story. A familiar case is objective narration.

Nativist Literature. Literature emphasizing indigenous culture. This is visible in african oral tradition.

Noble Savage. An idealized depiction of indigenous people. This is visible in romantic literature.

Natural Imagery. Imagery drawn from nature. This shows up in forest symbolism.

Narrative Hook. An opening that grabs attention. As an illustration, dramatic first lines.

Neo-tragedy. Modern tragedy focusing on ordinary people. For example, death of a Salesman.

O

Ode. A lyric poem expressing praise or deep feeling. For example, ode to a Nightingale by John Keats.

Omniscient Narrator. A narrator who knows everything about all characters. For example, third-person omniscient narration.

Oral Tradition. Cultural material passed through speech. A well-known example is folktales, proverbs, chants.

Oxymoron. Two contradictory words placed together. Consider "Deafening silence."

Onomatopoeia. Words that imitate sounds. For example, bang, buzz.

Objective Correlative. An external object representing emotion. We see this clearly in a storm reflecting anger.

Octave. An eight-line stanza. This is visible in the opening of a sonnet.

Offstage Action. Events occurring outside the stage. This is visible in reported deaths in drama.

Open Ending. An unresolved conclusion. This shows up in ambiguous novel endings.

Oral Poetry. Poetry composed and transmitted orally. As an illustration, praise poetry.

Omniscience. All-knowing perspective in narration. We see this clearly in author revealing inner thoughts.

Opposition. Conflict between characters or ideas. Consider protagonist vs antagonist.

Originality. Uniqueness in creative expression. This is visible in innovative narrative style.

Oedipal Conflict. Psychological conflict involving parent figures. As an illustration, oedipus Rex.

Overstatement. Exaggeration for emphasis. This is visible in "I waited forever."

Organic Unity. All elements of a work fitting together. For example, well-structured poems.

Oral Performance. Live presentation of literature. As an illustration, storytelling sessions.

Occasional Poem. A poem written for a specific event. Consider wedding poems.

Observation. Careful attention to detail. We see this clearly in realist descriptions.

On-stage Speech. Dialogue spoken on stage. This shows up in actor's lines.

Omnibus Character. A character embodying many traits. This shows up in symbolic figures.

Oblique Reference. Indirect allusion. As an illustration, hinting at events.

Oral Narrative. Story told orally. As an illustration, folktales.

Otherness. Perception of being different or alien. As an illustration, postcolonial literature.

Overlapping Dialogue. Characters speaking simultaneously. One good instance is comic scenes.

Objective Narration. Narration without emotional involvement. Take, for instance, detached narrator.

Onomastics. Study of names in literature. Consider symbolic naming.

Overture. An introductory section. A well-known example is prologue in drama.

Open Form. A flexible literary structure. This is visible in free verse poetry.

Occult Imagery. Imagery involving the supernatural. One good instance is ghost symbols.

P

Plot. The sequence of events in a story. As an illustration, exposition → Climax → Resolution.

Protagonist. The main character in a story. This shows up in hamlet in Hamlet.

Antagonist. A character or force opposing the protagonist. Consider claudius in Hamlet.

Point of View. The perspective from which a story is told. As an illustration, first- person narration.

Prologue. An introductory section of a literary work. A well-known example is opening speech in a play.

Poetry. Literature written in verse. For example, sonnets.

Prose. Ordinary written language without verse. We see this clearly in novels.

Personification. Giving human qualities to non-human things. As an illustration, "The wind whispered."

Paradox. A statement that seems contradictory but reveals truth. A well-known example is "Less is more."

Pun. A play on words with multiple meanings. A well-known example is comic wordplay in drama.

Pathos. Appeal to emotion. Consider tragic scenes.

Parable. A simple story teaching a moral lesson. Take, for instance, biblical parables.

Pastoral. Literature celebrating rural life. As an illustration, shepherd poems.

Parody. Imitation of a work for comic effect. One good instance is satirical poems.

Polemic. Strong argument against an idea. For example, protest literature.

Protagonistic Conflict. The central struggle faced by the protagonist. This is visible in man vs society.

Play. A dramatic work for performance. This shows up in an Inspector Calls.

Prosody. The study of meter and rhythm. For example, analysis of poetic stress.

Propaganda. Literature aimed at influencing opinion. A familiar case is political pamphlets.

Parallelism. Use of similar grammatical structures. A well-known example is "I came, I saw, I conquered."

Picaresque Novel. A novel about a rogue hero. For example, don Quixote.

Psychological Realism. Focus on inner thoughts and feelings. One good instance is modern novels.

Plot Twist. An unexpected turn of events. As an illustration, surprise endings.

Prose Poem. Poetic writing in prose form. For example, modern poetry.

Paratext. Elements surrounding the main text. Take, for instance, preface, footnotes.

Poetic Justice. Virtue rewarded and vice punished. As an illustration, moral endings.

Polyphony. Multiple voices or perspectives. We see this clearly in complex novels.

Performance Poetry. Poetry written for oral delivery. Take, for instance, slam poetry.

Persona. A speaker or voice adopted by the poet. A well-known example is dramatic persona.

Postcolonial Literature. Literature addressing colonial legacy. As an illustration, african novels.

Q

Quatrain. A stanza of four lines. For example, a Shakespearean sonnet is made up of quatrains.

Quotation. Exact words taken from a text or speaker. We see this clearly in direct speech in a novel.

Quest. A journey undertaken to achieve a goal. One good instance is the hero's journey in epic tales.

Question Mark. Punctuation used to show interrogation. A familiar case is "What is love?"

Quixotic Character. Idealistic but impractical character. A well-known example is don Quixote.

Qualitative Imagery. Imagery describing qualities rather than quantities. Take, for instance, soft light, harsh wind.

Quibble. A petty objection or argument. A familiar case is comic disputes in drama.

Quasi-Narrative. A text that resembles a narrative. This is visible in philosophical essays with story elements.

Quotation Marks. Punctuation showing speech or citation. For example, “She said.”

Quickening Pace. Increasing speed of narration. A familiar case is action scenes.

Quasi-Hero. A flawed or unconventional hero. Consider anti-heroes.

Question-and-Answer Technique. Use of rhetorical questions. A familiar case is didactic poetry.

Quatrain Rhyme Scheme. The pattern of rhyme in four-line stanzas. One good instance is aBAB.

Quotation Allusion. Indirect reference to another text. As an illustration, biblical echoes.

Qualifier. A word that limits or modifies meaning. This shows up in “Very,” “somewhat.”

Quest Motif. Recurring theme of searching. As an illustration, spiritual journeys.

Quiet Tone. Calm and subdued style. Take, for instance, reflective poetry.

Quasi-Drama. Work that resembles drama but isn’t staged. One good instance is closet drama.

Quiddity. The essence or core quality of something. We see this clearly in theme analysis.

Quirk. A peculiar trait of a character. We see this clearly in habitual gestures.

Questioning Narrator. Narrator who doubts or probes events. We see this clearly in reflective narrators.

Quasi-Epic. A work resembling an epic. Take, for instance, long narrative poems.

Quatrain Sequence. A poem made of linked quatrains. A well-known example is some lyric poems.

Quasi-Historical Fiction. Fiction loosely based on history. One good instance is mythologized history.

Qualitative Description. Descriptive language focusing on qualities. Consider “A gloomy room.”

Question Motif. Repeated questioning in a text. This shows up in existential poetry.

Quotation as Evidence. Use of quoted material in criticism. This shows up in literary analysis essays.

Quirkiness. Unusual charm or behavior. For example, comic characters.

Quasi-Realism. A blend of realism and fantasy. We see this clearly in magical realism.

Quotation-based Style. Writing heavily reliant on quotations. One good instance is scholarly writing.

R

Raconteur. A narrator or character skilled in storytelling. One good instance is the narrator in The Canterbury Tales.

Realism. A literary movement that depicts everyday life and ordinary people truthfully, without idealization. A familiar case is madame Bovary – Gustave Flaubert.

Refrain. A repeated line or phrase in a poem or song, usually at the end of a stanza. This is visible in “Nevermore” in The Raven by Edgar Allan Poe.

Repetition. The intentional reuse of words or phrases for emphasis or rhythm. One good instance is "Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow" – Shakespeare.

Resolution (Denouement). The final part of a plot where conflicts are resolved and the story ends. Consider the conclusion of Romeo and Juliet.

Rhetoric. The art of persuasive or effective speaking or writing. For example, political speeches and persuasive essays.

Rhetorical Question. A question asked for effect, not requiring an answer. This shows up in "Is this a dagger which I see before me?" – Shakespeare.

Rhyme. The correspondence of sounds at the ends of words. Consider light / night.

Rhyme Royal. A seven-line stanza rhyming ABABBCC, often written in iambic pentameter. A familiar case is used by Chaucer.

Rhyme Scheme. The pattern of end rhymes in a poem. As an illustration, sonnet rhyme scheme: ABAB CDCD EFEF GG.

Rhythm. The flow of sound created by stressed and unstressed syllables in poetry. For example, iambic rhythm in Shakespeare's plays.

Rising Action. The part of the plot where tension increases leading to the climax. As an illustration, the escalating conflict in Things Fall Apart.

Romance. A narrative centered on adventure, love, heroism, or the supernatural. Take, for instance, medieval chivalric romances.

Romantic Comedy. A dramatic work combining romance and humor, usually ending happily. A well-known example is much Ado About Nothing.

Romanticism. A literary movement emphasizing emotion, imagination, nature, and individualism. This is visible in poetry of William Wordsworth.

Round Character. A character with depth, complexity, and development. For example, macbeth in Macbeth.

Rule of Three. A stylistic principle where ideas are grouped in threes for emphasis and memorability. As an illustration, "Blood, sweat, and tears."

Run-On Line (Enjambment). A line of poetry that continues onto the next line without punctuation. For example, used frequently in modern poetry.

Run-On Sentence. A sentence that improperly joins independent clauses without correct punctuation. As an illustration, i came I saw I conquered.

S

Satire. The use of humour, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize human vices or social evils. This is visible in george Orwell's Animal Farm satirizes political corruption.

Sarcasm. A sharp, bitter, or cutting remark intended to mock or insult. Consider "Oh, great job!" said to someone who failed badly.

Scansion. The analysis of a poem's metrical pattern (stress and syllables). One good instance is identifying iambic pentameter in Shakespeare's sonnets.

Scene. A subdivision of an act in drama where action takes place in a single setting. This shows up in act 1, Scene 2 of Macbeth.

Science Fiction. A genre dealing with futuristic concepts such as space travel, advanced technology, or alien life. Consider h.G. Wells' The Time Machine.

Script. The written text of a play, film, or broadcast. We see this clearly in a movie screenplay.

Setting. The time and place in which a literary work occurs. This shows up in the village of Umuofia in Things Fall Apart.

Simile. A comparison between two unlike things using "like" or "as." Take, for instance, "As brave as a lion."

Soliloquy. A speech delivered by a character alone on stage revealing inner thoughts. A familiar case is hamlet's "To be or not to be" speech.

Sonnet. A 14-line poem written in a fixed rhyme scheme. This is visible in shakespearean sonnets.

Speaker. The voice that narrates or speaks in a poem. A familiar case is the speaker in Wordsworth's Daffodils.

Stereotype. An oversimplified and fixed idea of a person or group. Consider portraying all villains as ugly and cruel.

Stream of Consciousness. A narrative technique that presents thoughts as they flow naturally in the mind. This shows up in virginia Woolf's Mrs Dalloway.

Structure. The arrangement of parts or elements in a literary work. As an illustration, acts and scenes in a play.

Style. The distinctive way an author uses language. As an illustration, chinua Achebe's simple but symbolic style.

Suspense. A feeling of excitement or tension about what will happen next. Consider crime and detective novels.

Symbol. An object, person, or event that represents a deeper meaning. One good instance is the cross as a symbol of sacrifice.

Symbolism. The use of symbols to represent ideas or qualities. We see this clearly in darkness symbolizing evil.

Synesthesia. A literary device where one sense is described using another. A familiar case is "A loud colour."

Satirical Comedy. A humorous dramatic work that criticizes society. Consider the Marriage of Anansewa by Efua Sutherland.

Stock Character. A stereotypical character that appears repeatedly in literature. A well-known example is the wicked stepmother.

Suspended Ending. An ending that leaves the story unresolved. This shows up in cliff-hanger endings.

Saga. A long story of heroic deeds, often spanning generations. As an illustration, family epics.

Soliloquist. A character who delivers a soliloquy. Consider hamlet.

Supernatural. Events or beings beyond natural laws. For example, ghosts in Macbeth.

Slapstick. A form of physical comedy involving exaggerated actions. We see this clearly in falling, chasing, and physical humour.

Subplot. A secondary storyline that supports the main plot. We see this clearly in the Gloucester story in King Lear.

Setting (Temporal). The time period of a literary work. This shows up in colonial era in African novels.

Setting (Spatial). The physical location of a literary work. Consider a courtroom in To Kill a Mockingbird.

Sensory Imagery. Language that appeals to the five senses. A well-known example is "The sweet-smelling rain."

Soliloquy vs Monologue. Soliloquy: Character alone. Monologue: Long speech to others.

Satirical Irony. Irony used to mock or criticize. For example, praising corruption to condemn it.

Social Commentary. Literature that comments on social issues. One good instance is mine Boy by Peter Abrahams.

Stage Direction. Instructions in a play indicating movement, tone, or actions. A familiar case is (He exits angrily.)

Subject Matter. The main theme or topic of a literary work. This shows up in love, war, corruption.

T

Taboo. A subject avoided or restricted in society and literature.

Tall Tale. A humorous story with exaggerated events.

Tautology. Unnecessary repetition of an idea using different words.

Theme. The central idea or message of a literary work.

Thesis. The main argument or claim of a literary or critical work.

Third-Person Narration. A narrative voice outside the story using he, she, or they.

Tone. The author's attitude toward the subject or audience.

Tragedy. A serious drama depicting the downfall of a noble character.

Tragic Flaw (Hamartia). A character defect leading to downfall.

Tragic Hero. A protagonist whose flaw leads to tragedy.

Tragic Irony. When the audience knows more than the character.

Transposition. Shifting a story into a different context or form.

Trochee. A metrical foot with a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed one.

Trimeter. A poetic line containing three metrical feet.

Trilogy. A set of three related literary works.

Turning Point. A moment that changes the direction of a story.

Tract. A short written work expressing a strong viewpoint.

Tragicomedy. A work combining tragic and comic elements.

Transcendentalism. A movement emphasizing nature and individual intuition.

Translation. Rendering a text from one language into another.

Text. The actual written content of a literary work.

Texture. The overall feel created by language and style.

Theatre of the Absurd. Drama emphasizing meaninglessness of life.

Threnody. A poem of lament for the dead.

Title. The name of a literary work.

Topic Sentence. A sentence stating the main idea of a paragraph.

Topos. A common theme or motif in literature.

Tradition. Literary practices passed through generations.

Transgressive Literature. Literature that challenges moral or social norms.

Travelogue. A written account of travels.

Treatise. A formal and systematic written work on a subject.

Tribute. A work created in honour of a person or event.

Tropes. Commonly recurring literary devices or themes.

Type Character. A character representing a class or idea.

Typology. Symbolic interpretation linking events or characters.

Tension. Conflict or emotional strain in a narrative.

Testimony. A personal account or witness narrative.

Textual Analysis. Close examination of a literary text.

Theme Statement. A sentence expressing the central message of a text.

U

Unreliable Narrator. A narrator whose credibility is compromised. As an illustration, humbert Humbert in Lolita.

Unity. Cohesion of all elements in a literary work to form a harmonious whole. Consider a well-structured sonnet.

Urban Literature. Works depicting city life, often highlighting social issues. A well- known example is modern African novels set in Lagos.

Utopia. An imagined perfect society. A well-known example is thomas More's Utopia.

Unities (Classical). Principles of drama: unity of time, place, and action. A familiar case is aristotle's Poetics.

Understatement (Litotes). Deliberately downplaying a situation for effect. One good instance is "It's just a scratch" for a big wound.

Unfolding Plot. A plot revealed gradually through events. This is visible in mystery novels.

Underdog. A character expected to lose or fail, often winning sympathy. As an illustration, david in David and Goliath.

Universal Theme. A theme that transcends culture and time. This is visible in love, revenge, justice.

Uncanny. Something strangely familiar yet disturbing. As an illustration, gothic literature.

Ubiquitous Symbol. A symbol appearing repeatedly across works or genres. This is visible in light for knowledge.

Urban Legend. Modern folklore circulated as truth. A well-known example is stories of haunted buildings.

Unrhymed Verse. Poetry without rhyme. This shows up in blank verse in Hamlet.

Use of Dialogue. Technique to advance plot or develop characters. As an illustration, character conversations in novels.

Unity of Action. Principle that a play should have one main plotline. Consider classical Greek tragedy.

Uncensored Literature. Works published without social or political restrictions. We see this clearly in controversial modern novels.

Uplifting Tone. A tone that inspires or encourages. This shows up in motivational poetry.

Underplot. A secondary or minor plotline in a story. A well-known example is subplots in Shakespearean plays.

Uptake. How quickly a reader interprets symbols or ideas in text. A familiar case is figurative language comprehension.

Unfinished Narrative. A story left incomplete. We see this clearly in the Mystery of Edwin Drood by Dickens.

Unconventional Narrative. A story told in an unusual style or order. We see this clearly in cloud Atlas by David Mitchell.

Universal Character. A character whose traits are understood across cultures. A well-known example is the trickster figure.

Underscoring. Emphasizing a theme or idea in a work. As an illustration, repetition of "power corrupts" in a novel.

Unreconciled Conflict. A conflict left unresolved at the story's end. Consider open endings in modern novels.

Ubiquity. Presence of a recurring theme or motif throughout a work. One good instance is death motif in Macbeth.

Use of Irony. Employing irony for effect. A familiar case is a fire station burning down.

Unifying Motif. A recurring element that ties a work together. This shows up in water imagery in a poem.

Unexpected Outcome. A plot twist. One good instance is surprise endings in mystery novels.

Understatement Humor. Humor created by downplaying situations. This is visible in british dry wit.

Upbeat Ending. A positive or hopeful conclusion. One good instance is romantic comedies.

Uptempo Narrative. A story that moves quickly in pace. As an illustration, thrillers.

Unrehearsed Performance. Improvised storytelling. This is visible in oral tradition tales.

Universal Motif. Themes or symbols appearing across cultures. For example, the hero's journey.

Unorthodox Style. A writing style that breaks traditional rules. For example, stream- of-consciousness novels.

Unseen Character. A character who influences the story but never appears. Take, for instance, godot in Waiting for Godot.

Undetected Symbolism. Symbols that are subtle or hidden. One good instance is objects representing freedom.

Ultimate Concern. Central issue or moral question of a work. This shows up in fate vs free will.

Urban Setting. Story set in a city environment. Take, for instance, lagos in contemporary Nigerian novels.

Underdog Triumph. The victory of a marginalized or weak character. A familiar case is cinderella overcoming adversity.

V

Voice. The distinctive style or personality of the narrator or author. As an illustration, the sardonic voice of Holden Caulfield in The Catcher in the Rye.

Villain. A character who opposes the hero and creates conflict. Take, for instance, iago in Othello.

Verse. A line of poetry or a piece of writing in metrical form. A well-known example is shakespearean sonnets.

Verisimilitude. The appearance of being true or real in a literary work. Take, for instance, realistic dialogues in novels.

Vignette. A short, descriptive piece or scene in literature. For example, short, impressionistic scenes in The House on Mango Street.

Visual Imagery. Imagery that appeals to the sense of sight. This shows up in "The crimson sunset bathed the valley in gold."

Vocal Delivery. The way a narrator or character's voice is presented in spoken or dramatic literature. We see this clearly in actors reading a monologue.

Verbal Irony. Saying the opposite of what is meant. Take, for instance, "What a pleasant day!" during a storm.

Villanelle. A 19-line poem with repeated lines and a fixed rhyme scheme. For example, do not go gentle into that good night – Dylan Thomas.

Variant Reading. Differences between versions of a text. Consider manuscript vs. printed edition.

Voyage and Return. A narrative structure where a character goes on a journey and returns changed. Take, for instance, the Odyssey.

Verbal Pun. A play on words for humor or effect. As an illustration, "Time flies like an arrow; fruit flies like a banana."

Viewpoint. Perspective from which a story is told. Consider first-person, third-person, omniscient.

Vocal Characterization. Revealing character through speech patterns or dialogue. This shows up in dialects in Huckleberry Finn.

Villain Protagonist. A story told from the villain's perspective. We see this clearly in the Talented Mr. Ripley.

Visual Symbolism. Symbols that rely on visual representation. We see this clearly in a white dove symbolizing peace.

Verbal Parallelism. Repetition of similar grammatical structures in speech or writing. Consider "I came, I saw, I conquered."

Variant Plot. Alternative version of a plotline in adaptations. One good instance is movie adaptations of novels.

Verbal Expression. Use of language to communicate ideas effectively. A familiar case is persuasive speech in drama.

Voice-over. Narration added over visual media in plays or films. One good instance is documentary narration.

Victorian Literature. Literature produced during the reign of Queen Victoria (1837– 1901). This is visible in great Expectations – Charles Dickens.

Vocal Irony. Use of tone to convey meaning opposite to words. A well-known example is sarcastic remarks in dialogue.

Verbal Tension. Conflict created through dialogue. As an illustration, arguments in courtroom dramas.

Visual Narrative. Storytelling primarily through visual media. For example, graphic novels.

Vocal Inflection. Variation in tone or pitch conveying meaning. As an illustration, stage actors emphasizing emotion.

Villain Archetype. A recurring evil figure across stories and cultures. Consider the trickster villain.

Vernacular. Everyday language of a region or group. A well-known example is dialects in African novels.

Verifiable Fact. A fact that can be proven within nonfiction literature. Consider historical dates in biographies.

Vocal Rhythm. Cadence in spoken or performed literature. A familiar case is chanting in poetry readings.

Visual Allegory. Using visual symbols to represent abstract ideas. One good instance is paintings or illustrations conveying moral lessons.

Victim Character. A character who suffers misfortune due to events or others. One good instance is tess in Tess of the d'Urbervilles.

Vocal Projection. The strength of voice in performing literature. One good instance is stage actors projecting to reach an audience.

Voice Modulation. Changing voice tone to convey emotion. As an illustration, narration in radio plays.

Vivid Description. Language that creates clear mental images. This is visible in describing a forest in detail.

Volume (in Text). Length or size of a written work. For example, multi-volume epics.

Villainous Act. Action by a character causing harm or conflict. For example, iago's manipulation in Othello.

Verbal Imagery. Imagery conveyed through language rather than visual aids. A familiar case is "The air was thick with smoke and sorrow."

Verbatim. Using exact words from a source. Take, for instance, direct quotations in essays.

Visionary Literature. Works presenting imaginative, prophetic, or futuristic ideas. As an illustration, science fiction and dystopian novels.

W

Wit. Clever use of language to amuse or make a point. As an illustration, oscar Wilde's dialogues in The Importance of Being Earnest.

Wordplay. Creative manipulation of words for effect. Consider puns or double meanings.

Wuxia. Chinese genre featuring martial heroes and adventures. One good instance is traditional Chinese martial arts novels.

Wafting Imagery. Imagery that conveys smell or gentle movement. A well-known example is "The scent of jasmine drifted through the air."

Wall Narrative. A story framed around letters, diaries, or records. As an illustration, epistolary novels like Dracula.

Word Choice (Diction). The selection of words by an author to convey meaning. Take, for instance, formal vs. informal diction.

Wistfulness. A tone expressing melancholy longing. One good instance is reflective poetry.

Warnings. Cautionary messages in literature. This shows up in moral lessons in fables.

Word Order. Arrangement of words in a sentence affecting meaning. One good instance is inverted word order for poetic effect.

Written Dialogue. Dialogue presented in written form, e.g., letters. A well-known example is jane Austen's letters in novels.

World-Building. Creation of an imaginative setting in literature. We see this clearly in middle-earth in The Lord of the Rings.

Wanderer Motif. Character archetype of someone on a journey or quest. This shows up in odysseus in The Odyssey.

Western Literature. Literature originating from Europe or the Americas. A well- known example is shakespeare, Dickens.

Wordless Narrative. Story told entirely through images or actions. For example, graphic novels with minimal text.

Wicked Character. A character who embodies evil. This is visible in iago in Othello.

Wish Fulfillment. A narrative element where desires are realized. A well-known example is fairy tales granting wishes.

Whimsical Tone. Playful, fanciful, or amusing tone. For example, alice's Adventures in Wonderland.

Written Form. Literary work expressed in writing rather than orally. One good instance is novels, essays, plays.

Word Painting. Using language to visually or sensorially describe something. For example, "The sun spilled molten gold across the lake."

Word Repetition. Repeating words or phrases for effect. A familiar case is "Alone, alone, all all alone" – Coleridge.

Warmth of Tone. Tone that conveys friendliness or affection. Take, for instance, family narratives or personal letters.

Wicked Plot. A plan or scheme by characters creating conflict. A well-known example is villain's schemes in tragedies.

Word Association. Technique connecting words or ideas. A well-known example is stream-of-consciousness writing.

Waning Action. Events after climax leading to resolution. A well-known example is falling action in Romeo and Juliet.

Wickedness Revealed. Moment showing a villain's true nature. A well-known example is iago manipulating Othello.

Wide Scope. A story covering multiple locations, times, or perspectives. As an illustration, epic novels.

Wry Humor. Dry, ironic humor. A well-known example is jane Austen's social satire.

Word Economy. Using concise, precise language. We see this clearly in hemingway's minimalistic style.

Wound Motif. Physical or emotional injury as a recurring theme. As an illustration, scar in Macbeth.

Whispered Dialogue. Quiet speech to convey intimacy or secrecy. This shows up in confidential scenes in plays.

Worldview. The perspective or philosophy reflected in a work. Take, for instance, colonial vs. post-colonial worldview in African literature.

Wandering Hero. A hero traveling or seeking something. Take, for instance, odysseus or Gilgamesh.

Written Epiphany. A sudden realization experienced by a character in text. A well- known example is clarisse in Fahrenheit 451.

Word Fusion. Combining words to create meaning or effect. This is visible in portmanteau words like “brunch.”

Wagering Motif. Games, bets, or risk in literature. A familiar case is gambling in The Great Gatsby.

Wisdom Literature. Texts providing moral or practical guidance. This shows up in proverbs or parables.

Weight of Words. Emotional or intellectual impact of language. We see this clearly in powerful speeches in plays.

Whirlwind Plot. A fast-paced, action-packed narrative. Take, for instance, adventure novels.

Worldly Setting. A narrative set in a realistic, familiar world. We see this clearly in urban or rural realistic settings.

X

Xenophobia (Literary Usage). Fear or distrust of foreigners. One good instance is cultural tension in Achebe’s No Longer at Ease.

Xenia (Hospitality Motif). Classical theme of hospitality to strangers. We see this clearly in the Odyssey, Phaeacians helping Odysseus.

Xylography / Woodcut Illustration. Woodcut imagery accompanying texts. For example, medieval fables.

Xenoglossia. Use of foreign or unknown languages in literature. This is visible in dante’s Divine Comedy.

Xenial Character. Hospitable, friendly character. We see this clearly in phaeacians in The Odyssey.

Xerox Plot. A plot copied or heavily imitated from another work. As an illustration, remakes or retellings that closely mirror the original story.

Xerotic Setting. A dry or barren setting, often symbolic of emotional barrenness. We see this clearly in desert landscapes in allegorical stories.

Xylographic Imagery. Imagery derived from woodcut or visual art traditions within texts. We see this clearly in illustrated medieval morality tales.

Xenial Theme. A theme revolving around hospitality, friendliness, or welcoming strangers. One good instance is stories of travelers being aided by strangers.

X-factor in Character. A quality that makes a character stand out or captivates the audience. For example, hamlet's intelligence and indecision.

Y

Yarn. An informal term for a story or tale, often long and adventurous. A well-known example is oral folktales or sea stories told by sailors.

Yearning. A theme or tone expressing deep longing or desire. Take, for instance, romantic poetry often expresses yearning for love.

Young Adult (YA) Literature. Fiction aimed at adolescent readers, often featuring coming-of-age themes. A familiar case is the Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins.

Yin-Yang Motif. Use of opposites to symbolize balance in literature. This shows up in themes of light and dark, good and evil in Chinese literature.

Yoke Symbolism. Represents oppression, control, or burden. We see this clearly in the yoke in Animal Farm as a symbol of tyranny.

Year-in-Review Narrative. Stories that summarize events over a year or period. This is visible in biographical or historical works structured chronologically.

Youthful Protagonist. A young central character whose growth is key to the narrative. As an illustration, pip in Great Expectations.

Yielding Tone. A tone expressing submission, compliance, or humility. We see this clearly in characters accepting fate or societal norms.

Yiddish Influence. Use of Yiddish language or culture in literature to add authenticity or humor. Consider jewish-American literature.

Yearning Imagery. Descriptive language that evokes longing or desire. Consider "She gazed at the distant horizon, wishing for freedom."

Z

Zeugma. A figure of speech where a word applies to multiple parts of a sentence, often in different senses. For example, "She broke his car and his heart."

Zoomorphism. Attributing animal qualities to humans or objects. As an illustration, describing a cruel character as "snarling like a wolf."

Zany Character. A comic or eccentric character whose behavior is unusual or absurd. For example, the Fool in King Lear.

Zeitgeist. The spirit, mood, or ideas of a particular time period. One good instance is victorian literature reflecting social morals and class structure.

Zero Ending (Open Ending). A narrative conclusion that leaves the story unresolved. This shows up in the Mystery of Edwin Drood by Dickens.

Zodiac Imagery. Use of astrological signs or celestial imagery to symbolize fate or personality. We see this clearly in poems referencing stars or constellations to convey destiny.

Zestful Tone. A lively, enthusiastic, or energetic tone in literature. This shows up in adventure novels or comedic works.

Zealotry Theme. Literature exploring excessive passion or fanaticism. A well-known example is religious or political extremism in novels.

Zenith Moment. The peak or high point in a character's life or plot. This shows up in the climax of a tragedy or hero's greatest triumph.

Zero-Sum Conflict. A situation where one character's gain is another's loss. Take, for instance, rivalries in competitive or political dramas.

- End of Glossary -